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ABSTRACT

To test whether elementary social studies texts have changed in response to the back-to-basics movement, a content analysis was made of selected basal texts series published between 1969-1972 and reissued between 1979-1982. Quantitative data, anecdotal data, and educational criticism were used to compare eight matched text series for knowledge base, skills base, values base, and recommended teaching strategies. Results indicate that the back-to-basics movement has effected a return to traditional content and methods in social studies textbooks at all elementary levels. Findings included an increased emphasis on reading development; an increased emphasis on American history, geography, map and globe skills, citizenship education, and traditional American values; use of simpler vocabulary, shorter sentences and fewer concepts; a de-emphasis on innovative teaching suggestions; and increased testing of factual recall. (LP)

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HAS THE "BACK-TO-BASICS" MOVEMENT INFLUENCED ELEMENTARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS?

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The primary question of the investigation reported here was, "Has the 'back-to-basics' movement significantly affected the form and content of the elementary social studies curriculum as revealed by a content analysis of selected basal textbooks series published during the 1969-72 period compared with editions of the same series published during the 1979-1982 period?" In making this the primary question of the study, it was assumed that there was a close relationship between what appears in elementary social studies textbooks series and the content of the social studies curriculum in the elementary school. Sub-problems investigated in the study were:

1. Did the knowledge base of recent editions (1979-1982) of elementary social studies basal texts differ from earlier editions (1969-1972) of the same text series with regard to selected criteria characteristics of the "back-to-basics" movement as it related to social studies curriculum?

2. Did the skills base of recent editions (1979-1982) of elementary social studies basal texts differ from earlier editions of the same text (1969-1972) with regard to selected criteria characteristics of the "back-to-basics" movement as it related to social studies curriculum?

3. Did the values base of recent editions (1979-1982) of elementary social studies basal texts differ from earlier editions of the same text series (1969-1972) with regard to selected criteria judged to be characteristic of the "back-to-basics" movement as it related to social studies curriculum?

4. Did the teaching strategies thought most appropriate to the teaching of elementary social studies found in recent editions (1979-1982) of elementary social studies basal texts differ from

earlier editions (1969-1972) of the same text series with regard to selected criteria characteristic of the "back-to-basics" movement as it related to social studies curriculum?

The major hypotheses of the study were guided by the research problem and sub-problems. The major hypotheses of this study were:

1. No significant difference existed in the emphasis given to the development of reading skills in texts published in the 1969-1972 period compared with later (1979-1982) editions of those texts.

2. No significant difference existed in the emphasis given to the study of American history, heritage, and tradition in texts published in the 1969-1972 period compared with later editions (1979-1982) of those texts.

3. No significant difference existed in the emphasis given to the study of geography and map and globe skills in texts published in the 1969-1972 period compared with later (1979-1982) editions of those texts.

4. No significant difference existed in the emphasis given to the study of American government, civics, and citizenship in texts published in the 1969-1972 period compared with later editions (1979-1982) of those texts.

Definition of Terms

In this study the following terms were used as defined.

1. "Back-to-Basics"—With relation to social studies education, "back-to-basics" was an emphasis upon the curriculum elements of reading and writing, history and heritage, geography, map and globe skills, citizenship, patriotism and the inculcation of "American" or "traditional" values.

2. Basal Textbook Series—These were comprehensive programs (K-6) presented as hard cover textbooks by most major publishing houses.

3. New Social Studies—This was the structuring of curriculum around social science concepts, generalizations, and methodologies, inquiry oriented teaching strategies, and a broadening of the content base of social studies beyond the traditional history, geography, and civics.

Research Methodology

This study employed content analysis techniques that involved the gathering of frequency data, supplemented by anecdotal and case study data. The materials analyzed consisted of eight series of elementary social studies basal textbooks published during the 1969-1972 period matched with the equivalent series published by the same company in the 1979-1982 period. Data were gathered in these three ways:

1. Quantitative data were recorded on the Semantic Aspect Scale.
2. Anecdotal Data were recorded in a Research Log.
3. "Educational Criticism" was applied to one series from each period.

These three data banks were combined to form a triangulated case study treatment of one selected series as it appeared in each period.

Nine elementary social studies basal textbook series, published in the 1979-1982 period, were matched with series offered by the same published in the 1969-1972 period. The series selected for analysis were published by the following companies:

1969-1972 Period	1979-1982 Period
1. Exploring the Social Sciences, Litton Educational Publishing, Inc. 1971, New York	American Book Social Studies, Litton Educational Publishing, Inc. 1982, New York
2. Tiegs-Adams Social Studies Series Ginn and Company 1969, Boston	People and Their Heritage Ginn and Company 1983, Lexington
3. Ginn Social Science Series Ginn and Company 1972, Boston	People and Their Heritage Ginn and Company 1983, Lexington
4. The Social Sciences: Concepts and Values Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1970, New York	Living in Our World Harcourt, Brace and Javanovich, Inc. 1980, New York
5. Social Studies: Focus on Active Learning The Macmillan Company 1971, New York	Macmillan Social Studies The Macmillan Company 1982, New York

1969-1972 Period	1979-1982 Period
6. Investigating Man's World Scott, Foresman and Company 1970, Glenview	Scott, Foresman Social Studies Scott, Foresman and Company 1982, Glenview
7. Contemporary Social Science Curriculum Silver Burdett and Company 1972, Morristown	The World and It's People Silver Burdett and Company 1982, Morristown
8. The Laidlaw Social Science Program, Concepts in Social Science Laidlaw Brothers 1972, River Forest	Understanding the Social Sciences Program Laidlaw Brothers 1981, River Forest
9. Concepts and Inquiry The Educational Research Council Social Science Program Allyn & Bacon, Inc. 1971, Boston	Concepts and Understanding The Educational Research Council Social Science Program Allyn & Bacon, Inc. 1982, Boston

Materials published by the Macmillan Company could not be obtained due to delays in publication; hence, this series was eliminated from the analysis, leaving eight matched series. Other series for example, that published by Science Research Associates which had not undergone substantial revision, Holt-Sanders which did not rely on basal texts, or Houghton and Mifflin that could not be matched according to period of publication, were also eliminated from the study. Those series which were selected for analysis, however, were widely used in elementary classrooms throughout the United States.

Quantitative Analysis. The books in each series from both periods were analyzed according to criteria clearly characteristic of "back-to-basics" as related to elementary social studies curriculum. The criteria selected were:

1. An emphasis on reading skill development as an important concern of the social studies.
2. An emphasis on American history, heritage, and tradition.
3. An emphasis on place geography and map and globe skills.
4. An emphasis on the study of American government, civics, and citizenship.

5. An emphasis on the inculcation of traditional values, such as patriotism, loyalty, obedience, respect, and the work ethic.

The materials were analyzed according to the above criteria and relative emphasis judged and recorded using a Semantic Aspect Scale first used by Zilman and reported in Krippendorff (1980). The scale is shown in Figure 1, Semantic Aspect Scale.

The data recorded on the Semantic Aspect Scale were analyzed for each of the selected "back-to-basics" criterion using a Two-Way Analysis of Variance (Period x Grade Level). The main effects for the period of publication and grade level were computed, and the period by grade level interactions was sought. The significance level was set at .01.

Statistical analysis showed that in later editions of the texts (1979-1982) greater emphasis was given to each of the criteria examined. With the exception of Criterion 2, American history, heritage and tradition, for which the impact was felt most strongly at the upper elementary levels, the trend was felt uniformly across grades. Greatest variation was found for Criterion 1, Reading Skill Development. For all criteria, however, elements that were present in some form in the 1969-1972 period were found to be significantly amplified in the texts published during the later period, 1979-1982. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Anecdotal Data. Supplementary anecdotal data were recorded in a research log while the quantitative data collection was in progress. This provided a record of contradictions in the data, difficulties in applying criteria or instruments and of clear trends that may, or may not, have emerged as "statistically significant" in the study. In practice, it was found also that the process of compiling this record assisted in the making of judgments on the Semantic Aspect Scale for the various criteria.

For purposes of consistency, the research log was compiled under the following headings for each book and series:

1. Administrative Data
2. Series Data
3. Book Data
4. Frequency Data
5. Additional Data and Commentary

6.

FIGURE 1. SEMANTIC ASPECT SCALE

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA: Time period: 1969-72/1979-82. Date:

Series Title: Publisher:

Book Title: Author/s:

Grade:

CRITERIA OF ANALYSIS: "Back to Basics" in Social Studies

1. To what degree does this book emphasise Reading Skill Development, e.g., Vocabulary, Comprehension, Study Skills.

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
not present	very little	little	medium	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

2. American history, heritage and tradition

e.g. Founding Fathers, heroes and great men and women, military and political history.

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
not present	little	little	medium	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

3. Physical or place geography and map and globe skills

e.g. States and capitals, regions and rivers, capes and bays, direction and location.

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
not present	little	little	medium	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

4. American government, civics and citizenship

e.g. Constitution, Bill of Rights, The Flag, Government and Law, political process and community service.

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
not present	little	little	medium	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

5. Inculcation of traditional values, attitudes and beliefs.
e.g. Patriotism, loyalty, respect, work ethic, "freedom" and democracy.

0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
not present	little	little	medium	much	very much
1	2	3	4	5	6

Table 1: Results of Analysis of Variance, Criterion 1-5 for Main Effects, Period of Publication, Grade Level, and Period of Publication by Grade Level Interaction.

Criterion	Source of Variation	df	F	Signif. of F.
1. Reading Skill Development	Period of Publication	1,84	57.65	.001*
	Grade Level	5,84	.071	.996
	Period x Grade	5,84	1.231	.302
2. American History, Heritage, and Tradition	Period of Publication	1,84	6.84	.011*
	Grade level	5,84	7.26	.001*
	Period x Grade	5,84	.796	.555
3. Geography & Map & globe Skills	Period of Publication	1,84	11.73	.001*
	Grade Level	5,84	1.82	.017
	Period x Grade	5,84	1.59	.170
4. American Government, Civics & Citizenship	Period of Publication	1,84	26.81	.001*
	Grade Level	5,84	1.158	.337
	Period x Grade	5,84	.254	.937
5. Inculcation of Traditional values, attitudes, & beliefs.	Period of Publication	1,84	14.99	.004*
	Grade Level	5,84	1.247	.295
	Period x Grade	5,84	.300	.911

* p .01.

Some reoccurring themes and elements in the Anecdotal Record were:

1. In most series there was a clear trend toward simplification of the text in an apparent effort to lower readability levels. Restriction on vocabulary, sentence length, and structure to some degree 'homogenized' the prose to a style that seemed remarkably similar across publishers.

2. The materials offered by Ginn and Company confirmed the hypothesis of a swing "back-to-basics" in social studies. The Tiegs-Adams Social Studies material had been published by Ginn and Company since at least 1951 and did not reflect the New Social Studies philosophy. In 1972, the company published a more up-to-date series with Leonard Kenworthy as senior author. This series was clearly influenced by New Social Studies rationales. However, by 1982, the Kenworthy series was no longer being published and a revised version of the 1951 Tiegs-Adams series had replaced it.

3. In all series, improvements were apparent in presentation, production, printing, layout, and design. Little diminution of the bookmakers' craft was noted.

4. The lack of statements of rationale in the most recent texts indicated that any attempt to teacher proof materials had been abandoned.

5. Developments in the social studies books over the period studied confirmed that changes in emphasis and focus were being made rather than grand swings of some pedagogical pendulum were taking place.

6. It was found that test materials were more prevalent in books published in 1979-1983 than in the earlier editions of the texts.

Educational Criticism. In addition, the process of educational criticism, in alliance with quantitative and anecdotal data, provided means by which to go beyond identification and classification to add a different, yet selective perspective by which more subtle meanings and phenomena were brought into focus. In this way, the scientific could be placed alongside the subjective, and the qualitative alongside the quantitative, in order to "get inside" the materials under analysis and move beyond just surface description.

The data derived from the three sources outlined thus far were then combined to form an in-depth case study analysis of a series that seemed to have been significantly affected by "back-to-basics" criteria. The materials published by Ginn and Company in 1972 and 1982 were subjected to a modified form of "educational criticism" adapted from the model offered by Eliot Eisner (1972) and graduate students at Stanford University. Data derived from these three sources—Semantic Aspect Scale, the Anecdotal Data, and Educational Criticism—were combined to construct a triangulated case study of the series that quantitative analysis showed had been the most significantly changed by the movement "back-to-basics" in social studies. This was an attempt to uncover the nature and extent of the changes that had taken place in the test materials during the 1972-1982 period.

Major Findings

Based on the analysis of the quantitative data, these major findings were identified.

1. Greater stress was placed on reading skill development in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with the 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

2. Greater stress was placed on the study of American history, heritage, and tradition in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with the 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

3. Greater stress was placed on the study of geography and map and globe skills in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with the 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

4. Greater emphasis was placed on the study of American government, civics, and citizenship in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

5. Greater stress was placed on the inculcation of traditional values, attitudes, and beliefs in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with earlier editions of the texts.

6. The impact of the "back-to-basics" movement on the elementary social studies curriculum was reflected uniformly across all grade levels with the exception of the criterion, American history, heritage, and tradition, which was most concentrated at the fifth-grade level. However, the overall trend toward more

traditional content and methods in elementary social studies curriculum and instruction was reflected at each grade level.

7. The impact of the "back-to-basics" movement on the elementary social studies curriculum was not reflected uniformly across the series offered by publishers during the 1969-1972 and 1979-1982 periods. Clearly, some publishers reacted more dramatically than others to changes in curriculum emphasis during the 1972-1982 period.

8. The data analysis indicated that in some cases claims made for elementary social studies basal text materials did not match closely with the content offered or the methods suggested in the texts.

9. The analysis of the data found that in series published during the 1979-1982 period the text had been simplified with respect to vocabulary, sentence length, and number of concepts treated in order to reduce the readability levels of the books.

10. The brevity of rationale statements and notes to teachers in the 1979-1982 editions indicated that earlier attempts to direct teachers toward innovative practices of the New Social Studies had been de-emphasized.

11. Greater stress was placed on skill development, in particular reading skills, map and globe skills, and study skills, in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with the 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

12. Testing materials that emphasized factual recall were found to be more prevalent in texts published during the 1979-1982 period compared with the 1969-1972 editions of the texts.

13. Changes in elementary social studies curriculum were characterized more by changes in emphasis than by the complete purging of either traditional or new Social Studies concepts and methods from the materials during either the 1969-1972 or 1979-1982 periods.

14. Anecdotal and case study data were useful supplementary data-gathering procedures to complement quantitative analysis.

15. Educational connoisseurship and educational criticism are useful procedures when applied to the analysis of published text materials.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. These were:

1. Reading skill development has become a major factor in social studies instruction at the elementary level.

2. History and geography have re-emerged as the predominant disciplines at the elementary level in the social studies.

3. The civics and citizenship focus has become a major concern of social studies instruction.

4. The expanding environment framework was reflected in the 1979-1982 materials and is firmly established in elementary social studies curriculum.

5. Elementary social studies basal text materials at no time completely dropped the basics.

6. The trend toward "back-to-basics" is strong enough that many of the innovative reforms of the 1960's have been reduced in the more recent textbooks.

7. Many changes which took place in elementary social studies textbooks during the 1972-1982 period, such as improved graphics, fewer racial, ethnic, or sexist stereotypes, and improvements in layout and design, have resulted from other influences such as the women's movement, minority movements, and improved technology rather than the "back-to-basics" movement.

8. The triangulation procedure in which three varied data sources were utilized to corroborate findings proved to be a valuable means of validation and allowed more perceptive conclusions to be reached.

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